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ABSTRACT

This monograph describes results of focus group interviews with 16 regular and special education teachers in Kentucky concerning their experience with including students with disabilities in regular education classrooms. An introduction notes the trend away from selective mainstreaming toward increased inclusion of students with disabilities in regular programs while providing needed special educational support services. Findings indicated that teachers' concerns focused on time, support, and appropriateness of services. Obstacles and barriers were identified by the teachers in the areas of grading issues, parental apprehension, and compatibility of collaborating teachers. The necessity of support from administrators and other teachers was stressed, along with the need for inservice/preservice training, especially within the classroom. Participants suggested many effective strategies. They also reported effects of inclusion on the classroom climate, noting that the critical factor appeared to be the behavior of the special education student. Eight recommendations are offered, such as continued provision of a continuum of services, optimizing the planning time of collaborating teachers, and maximizing opportunities for sharing successful inclusion processes. Appendices include the interview protocol and a student goal/activity matrix. (DB)

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Concerns About and Effective Strategies for Inclusion: Focus Group Interview Findings from Kentucky Teachers

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March 1996

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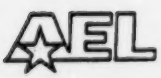

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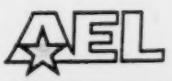

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The inclusion of students with disabilities into regular education classrooms has been the focus of several Kentucky projects including those conducted by the Kentucky Department of Education and the Systems Change Project based at the University of Kentucky in Lexington. In recent years issues relating to inclusion that impact regular and special education teachers and school support personnel have become focal points for conferences hosted and information shared by the Kentucky Education Association (KEA), the largest professional teachers organization in the state. It was to these informed educators that investigators in this study turned for the nomination of regular education and special education teachers with one or more years of experience with inclusion to participate in focus groups. Through the cooperation of staff from these organizations and others, 43 educators were nominated to participate in one of two focus group interviews. AEL appreciates the contribution of the following educators who identified focus group participants:

Kyra Anglin, Jefferson County Schools

Jackie Farmer-Kearns, Kentucky Systems Change Project

Sharon Felty-Comer, Kentucky Education Association

Anne Moll, Kentucky Department of Education

Jerry Price, Jefferson County Schools

Charles Schneider, Kentucky Education Association

Conrad Young, Clark County Schools

Several invitees cited competing demands on their time connected with the state's extensive professional development efforts related to the Kentucky Education Reform Act as preventing them from participating in the AEL focus group interviews. However, 16 regular and special education teachers were able to join AEL investigators in the Kentucky interviews held on May 1 and 2, 1995 in Lexington. AEL recognizes the time and effort devoted to sharing insights about inclusion by the following educators:

Sandra Bowyer, Jefferson County Schools

Jean Clayton, Kenton County Schools

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Joy Gray, Daviess County Schools

Margo Keller, Pulaski County Schools

LouAn Land, Boyle County Schools

Connie McVicker-Smith, Jessamine County Schools

Shirley Purvis, McCracken County Schools

Lisa Sharp, Clark County Schools

Paula Vanover, Boyle County Schools

Cathy Warmack, McCracken County Schools

Marti Wilson, McCreary County Schools

Peggy Wood, Jefferson County Schools

Renee Yates, Boyle County Schools

INTRODUCTION

Since the passage of federal legislation (the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, Public Law 94-142 in 1975; and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA] in 1990), both special educators and regular educators have carefully examined the relationships between their programs and services to children. During this period, the emphasis in practice has shifted from mainstreaming (the selective placement of special education students in one or more "regular" education classes based upon the student's ability to "keep up" with the class) to inclusion (the commitment to educate each child, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom he or she would otherwise attend). In effect, inclusion involves bringing special education services to the child (as opposed to enrolling them in pull-out programs) and requiring only that the child benefit from a regular education placement rather than "keep up" with the class (Rogers, 1993). Throughout the years since the passage of IDEA, the interpretation of "least restrictive environment" has evolved in response to parent and child advocate pressures, increased research, and creation of technologies and methods for adaptive learning.

Several states, including all states in AEL's Region, have responded to federal mandates by creating policies, regulations, or guidelines to recommend progression toward inclusion for the education of special needs children. As these changes are carried out at the local level, some regular education teachers have experienced appropriate professional development, special educator or aide assistance in the classroom, caps on the size of classes enrolling special education students, and involvement in development of student Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and/or placement conferences conducted for their special education students.

But reform accompanied by support has not been the rule in all districts or schools. Many teachers have complained of the absence of these supports and have described "horror" stories of inappropriate placements and classroom disruptions after the introduction of special education students (Baines, L., Baines, C., and Masterson, C., 1994; Rogers, 1993; Virginia Education Association, 1993; West Virginia Federation of Teachers/AFT, 1994). While special educators also need assistance in developing collaborative working arrangements with others, regular or general educators (as they are sometimes referred to in the literature) who often have no or little training in special education, need information on strategies effective with special education students (West Virginia Federation of Teachers/AFT, 1994; Virginia Education Survey of Special Education Issues, 1993).

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

AEL's Classroom Instruction program has worked with and for teachers since 1985 to involve them in research and development efforts that build on current research and the wisdom of practice in "hot" topic areas. Inclusion has been such a "hot" topic since enactment of the initial federal legislation designed to provide a free and appropriate education for all children with disabilities (Education for All Handicapped Children Act, P.L. 94-142, 1975) was enacted, challenged in the courts, sustained, and reinforced through more recent legislation (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], 1990; and the Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA], 1990).

The broad interpretation of IDEA's "least restrictive environment" has allowed children with disabilities, previously secluded into separate education programs staffed by specialists, to participate in the mainstream educational program and the everyday lives of Americans through accommodations such as handicapped access to buildings and transportation, signing of speeches and performances, instructional modifications for individual students, and peer tutoring. Moving students with disabilities into regular classes as the first placement (with pull-out programs and additional assistance within the classroom provided "as needed") has changed instruction for these students, their teachers, and their classmates. This study sought to identify the problems/concerns and the effective strategies associated with inclusion that have been discovered by some regular and special educators experienced with inclusion in each state of AEL's Region (Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia). Since the study was a qualitative examination of teacher perceptions, focus group interviews were selected as an appropriate methodology.

Objectives for the study are as follows:

- Provide focus group interview opportunities for special and regular educators experienced with inclusion to express concerns about associated classroom problems and to share descriptions of strategies they have found effective;
- Increase teacher awareness of strategies effective for helping special education students in regular (general) education classes;
- Develop state summaries and a Regional summary of identified obstacles and strategies useful in helping special education students in regular classes.

Concerns about and Effective Strategies for Inclusion: Focus Group Interview Findings from Kentucky Teachers reports the study procedures, results, conclusions, and recommendations developed from analysis of data from the two focus group interviews conducted by AEL in the

state. For educators assisting teachers, the report provides an orientation to the concerns of teachers who are experienced with inclusion. This document and, more particularly, its companion report *Teacher Perceptions of and Strategies for Inclusion: A Regional Summary of Focus Group Interview Findings*, provide numerous effective strategies contributed by focus group participants for use in readers' schools and classrooms. Finally, recommendations included in both reports can help administrators and teachers at every level in implementing inclusion as a systemic and beneficial process for all. **For further information on the study, or to acquire summary reports from focus groups in other states of AEL's Region or additional resources on inclusion, contact the Distribution Center, AEL, P.O. Box 1348, Charleston, WV 25325; 800/624-9120; or http://www.ael.org.**

STUDY PROCEDURES

AEL's Classroom Instruction program director, Jane Hange, contacted traditional AEL partners with a state perspective on the issue to present the project and to request cooperation in the identification of teachers most experienced with inclusion who could discuss their concerns/questions and effective classroom strategies. In Kentucky, staff of the Kentucky Department of Education, the Kentucky Systems Change Project of the Interdisciplinary Human Development Institute (University of Kentucky), the Kentucky Education Association (largest teacher association in the state), and the KEA representative to AEL's Board recommended for participation 43 regular and special education teachers who had one or more years of experience with inclusion. AEL staff sent invitations to all for focus group interview participation at interviews to be held May 1 and 2, 1995 in Lexington, Kentucky. Seven participants, including six special educators, provided information during the May 1 interview, and nine participants, among them seven special educators, attended the May 2 interview. A total of 16 sessions, including a field test of the interview questions, were held with 144 participants throughout the Region.

Each tape-recorded focus group interview involved discussion of 10 questions (see Interview Protocol, Appendix A) and required approximately three hours. Greg Leopold, trained focus group interviewer with AEL's Planning, Research, and Evaluation staff, conducted both interviews, and Jane Hange assisted with field notes and facilitation. Round-trip mileage and a light lunch were provided as incentives for the participants. Also, teachers were invited to bring descriptions of strategies they found effective in assisting special education students. These strategies were discussed at the conclusion of the interview, and all participants were mailed a compilation of the strategies from their session. Each participant, and those who recommended educators, will receive a copy of this report and the Regional summary of findings.

RESULTS

This section discusses the major findings from the Kentucky focus group interviews. Each of the interview questions (see Appendix A) is used as a heading to direct the reader's attention throughout the results. Conclusions and recommendations based on the data are offered in subsequent sections. Few differences were noted between responses of special educators and those of regular educators. Where important to the meaning of a statement, the role of the educator is noted.

Concerns

Participants were asked to describe their concerns regarding inclusion. Teacher concerns could be summarized under three major headings: time, support, and appropriateness of services.

Time. The concern with time was multi-faceted. Participants described common planning time for regular and special educators, scheduling, time necessary for serving many students, and the time associated with implementing the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) as concerns.

Many teachers noted that adequate time for the special and regular educator was essential to provide appropriate services for the special education student. Nearly all of the special educators indicated not having enough common planning time.

The number of special education students with which special education teachers needed to work was described as a major concern. Special education teachers "were spread too thin." One special educator noted, "We cannot effectively collaborate with more than 3-4 regular teachers." Another teacher said, "Being assigned a large number of students and trying to get to each one, I find myself serving 15 or 16 kids at many diverse levels. It really stresses me because I don't feel like I can get to all my kids like I need to."

Support. Teachers also indicated that support from colleagues, administrators, and parents was important for successful implementation of inclusion. One participant suggested that a clearer definition of inclusion might be helpful in that respect. She said, "It is real important for people to understand the definition of inclusion, and not to think that it means total inclusion for every child. Inclusion is on an individual basis."

Many teachers described the importance of working collaboratively with other teachers. One teacher said, "You work well with some people and you don't work well with others, and

when your child is in a classroom where you don't work well together, collaboration is impossible." Many teachers reinforced the importance of teamwork throughout the discussions.

Many participants, both special and regular educators, noted that many regular education teachers were apprehensive about their preparation for working with special education students. Special education "terminology", understanding the specific needs of special education students, and fear of potential behavior problems were all expressed by participants as concerns of regular education teachers. One special education teacher related difficulty in "getting regular education teachers to understand the different outcomes or expectations for special needs children." She also noted that sometimes regular educators "don't feel adequate, or feel that they are not doing their job." Another teacher remarked, "Teachers in my school are afraid they are going to get special education children without the support that is needed."

Some teachers described the concern that special education students would be disruptive in class. One teacher said, "If you spend a lot of time getting a disruptive student in a calm state, what happens to the 28 other children? Teachers are afraid of what they are going to do in that situation." Another special education teacher talked about the time spent on "charting and documenting" negative behavior. She also suggested that some of the other regular education students picked up on the negative behavior and exhibited that behavior themselves.

Several participants suggested that without the support of the school administration, inclusion is ill-fated. One teacher said, "Commitment from everyone, especially from the administration in the district, is essential." A teacher who had received support from her principal reported, "My principal laid the groundwork on day one by saying she would be involved in planning and teaching class." Another teacher suggested that administrators could show support by anticipating problems and considering ways to address those problems before including special education students. Administrative support exists in many forms, including faculty and public relations, provision of personnel and material resources, and schedule adjustments to accommodate common planning time for collaborating teachers.

Personnel assistance seemed to be lacking in several of the sites represented by participants. One teacher, speaking of her students who had physical disabilities and severe behavior problems, said, "Teaching assistants have a real key role. They are really instrumental in carrying out the IEP."

Regarding lack of personnel support, one regular educator reported, "I hear from regular teachers that many special education students put in their classroom just sit there. These teachers feel a lot of the students are not getting the support they need or the support they got in the self-contained classroom."

Participants described the necessity of support from parents of both regular education and special education students. Getting the parents to understand the inclusion process seemed to cause the most difficulty. For example, one teacher suggested that it was important for parents to understand that "least restrictive environment does not always mean the regular classroom."

Appropriate services. Several participants described concerns about providing appropriate services. Appropriate services meant many things.

Noting that special needs children required modifications to the curriculum, one teacher said, "We always have the 'we don't want to lower the curriculum or lower the standards views". Another participant said, "We don't want to water down the curriculum to make the other children successful, yet we still need to meet IEP goals".

One teacher noted that while technological equipment (assistive technology and computers) was available for special education students, the human resources to implement the technology was often not available. The teacher said, "We don't just need to buy the software and the hardware, but we need to have the people who can use it."

Some participants even expressed concern about students getting services at all because of loss of staff or revisions to state definitions of learning disabled students. One teacher noted, "In the primary program, fewer students are referred because they are in a multiage group, so by the time they go to intermediate, there are no labels, so I am worried that they won't get the extra services once they leave the primary program. Nobody likes labels, but you have to have labels to get money to get teachers." Fewer students identified will lead to loss of special educators.

Obstacles and Barriers

Several barriers or obstacles were noted by teachers regarding their experiences with inclusion. Barriers described included: issues surrounding grading, parental reluctance, and the incompatibility of some collaborating teachers.

Grading issues. One teacher described concerns from other teachers about grading: "If I have a child in my classroom who only does half the work, how can I give him an A. It is very difficult to convince teachers that if a student can do ten multiplication problems and get them all right, he or she doesn't need to do twenty just because everyone else did." Most participants acknowledged that there was far less difficulty in convincing the students that this was a fair practice: "The kids just naturally seem to flow into it."

One teacher recommended the *Fat City: Frustration, Anxiety, and Tension* videotape with Richard LaVoie to help convince teachers of special education students' needs. Another teacher suggested pointing out the "small steps" or gains that special education students make to other teachers to illustrate success.

Parental apprehension. Parental reluctance was noted by several participants. Many teachers indicated that a lot of their time was spent convincing parents that inclusion could work. Interestingly, most of the parental concerns described were from the parents of special education students, not from regular education students, because parents of children with special needs were used to education in self-contained classrooms. One teacher noted, "I think my special education parents were amazed at what their children were learning because they were being exposed to the regular curriculum." One teacher suggested, "When educating parents, you have to stick to it. I did a lot of putting out fires, and a lot of mini-education. I assured parents that the student had an IEP that we were working toward." Some teachers also described benefits of using an activity matrix to explain to parents particular skills a special education student might be acquiring during specific activities.

A few teachers described apprehension on the part of some parents of regular education students. One teacher noted that parents asked, "Why is the special education teacher coming into the classroom?" The teacher explained, "I would tell them that we had a lot of diverse needs in the classroom, and she was there to help me meet all those needs." The teacher went on to note, "Once the parents realized she was there to help, no one bucked the system. What parent doesn't want someone there to help any child?" Another teacher who worked with students with multiple disabilities noted some parents of regular education students were concerned that the "special education student is going to demand a lot of attention and their brilliant child over here is going to get no attention." She noted, however, "Our principal invited the parents to go to the classroom and see how it was going." Another teacher reported that she tries to communicate to parents that, "Not only will this student not take away from your child, but your child will get more out of the experience."

Other teachers described situations with parents where the parents did not understand the processes associated with inclusion. One teacher described a situation where the special education students were not completing homework so that they would be placed in a self-contained classroom. Parents did not understand why their kids were failing. The teacher noted, "It is really hard to get some parents to get away from 'you're not taking care of my baby', or 'you're not looking out for or turning in his homework for him'. Parents have to learn that special education students need to be responsible."

Compatibility of collaborating teachers. Personalities not conducive to collaborating were noted as a concern by several participants. One teacher observed that not all teachers were going to be able to work together: "You need to keep your collaboration kids in with teachers

who will support them." Another teacher described a lesson she learned early on: "If you want to include your kids and integrate your kids, you have to include yourself and integrate yourself with school activities. Sometimes special education teachers go off by themselves, but you have to get on those committees and do the things that other teachers do." Several teachers noted that inclusion was much more successful when teachers were able to choose colleagues with whom they would collaborate. One teacher noted, "It helps if you share the same philosophy." Another said, "I keep the five teachers I work with in a perpetual state of owing me a favor!" Some teachers noted that positive modeling of working with the special education students in the regular classroom by special education teachers encouraged teachers who were initially reluctant. A special education teacher noted, "Teachers who aren't open at first see you work with someone and realize that you are another set of hands. They suddenly become much more open to inclusion."

One special educator noted that not all special education teachers possess appropriate attitudes. He said, "There are some who come in and say 'I will not do any activities that resemble something an aide would do.'" One pair of collaborating teachers who participated in a focus group interview said that at the beginning of every year, they make it clear to students that they are "equal" teachers and each takes a turn taking the lead.

Essential Supports

Nearly all teachers reported that support from administrators and other teachers is essential. In addition, having common planning time was described as very important. One teacher noted specifically that administration must not let the inclusion classrooms become the "dumping grounds" for all problem students. Superintendents and principals with special education backgrounds were described as more supportive from the beginning.

The importance of community support was noted by several teachers. One teacher said, "If you get the community involved and they know what's happening in the school system that's positive, they can do a lot to change the negative attitudes toward inclusion." Another suggested getting the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) involved.

Support from other special education professionals was described as very important. One participant described her association with a fellow teacher of children with similar disabilities in her district as extremely important. She said, "We don't have to talk often, but we know that we are there for each other." Several teachers noted the support of ancillary staff, such as school counselors and school psychologists, as very helpful.

The Systems Change Project based at the Interdisciplinary Human Development Institute at the University of Kentucky was described as offering a lot of support to teachers through

grants. Several teachers described the workshops offered through Systems Change. One example described was COACH—Choosing Options and Accommodations for Children. This program assists in developing a family-centered IEP.

Natural supports (like peer tutoring) are essential. One teacher noted, "We are falling short of achieving what we can with natural supports." Another teacher described the excitement of the students as being important. "They come in excited and interested in finding out how you are going to do something differently."

Effective Strategies

Participants described many strategies they found as effective. Some of those mentioned included:

- developing an activity matrix. (see Appendix B)
- developing on the spot adaptations.
- sharing lesson plans on Friday afternoons for the next week.
- using a carbonless copy planning book to share copies among teachers and aides.
- having common planning time.
- having IEP monitoring sheets for regular educator use.
- providing a memo to students on Monday morning for the week's work (tests, assignments, projects, etc.).
- providing notebooks for all students to help with organization, notes and assignments for parents to sign. Teachers check notebooks weekly.
- using skills streaming (reinforces social skills).
- using concrete manipulatives.
- implementing DOL—Daily Oral Language.
- using Box it, Bag it calendar, KISS.

- providing peer support in the middle level grades.
- implementing peer tutoring.
- changing criteria for grading.
- using cooperative learning.
- implementing High Scope Preschool Curriculum.
- implementing Plan-Do-Review.
- using self-evaluation for groups.
- assigning specific jobs in a group setting (writer, researcher, etc.).
- using sensitivity in grouping students (groups of four were suggested).

Effects on Classroom Climate

Participants indicated that having special education students in the regular classroom affected both regular education teachers and students. The participants stated that the critical factor seemed to be the behavior of the special education student.

Behavior of special education students. One regular education teacher noted that effects on the classroom should be examined on an individual basis. She said, "Some children function very well in a regular classroom with no disruption, and then there are other children that no matter what you do, have difficulty functioning in a regular classroom."

Most teachers agreed that a special education student's behavior is more closely related to his/her classroom success than academic ability. Some noted, however, that regular education students have also learned to ignore inappropriate behavior and to stand up for their rights. Others observed that appropriate planning helps to minimize disruption from behavior problems. One teacher suggested viewing the videotape *Educating Peter* to learn ways to deal with the inappropriate behavior.

Effect on regular education students. One teacher reported that inclusion enabled her classroom to become a more relaxed place. There was more flexibility and less rigidity. Some teachers described positive effects from accepting others with differences. Others noted that students learned they need to work with all types of people to be successful. Another teacher

said that the inclusive classroom provided an environment where all students could be successful.

One participant reported that the behavior and academic performance of regular education students in her classroom improved because they knew they had to be "role models." Another teacher observed, "The care and concern shown by the regular education students has just baffled the parents." She added, "I think it has helped with the whole discrimination issue because these kids are growing up in a world where kids are different. I've seen a big change in their attitudes towards others." Some teachers indicated inclusion has helped change the attitudes of parents as well.

Effect on regular education teachers. Teachers attitudes changed once they got to know the special education student as an individual. One teacher noted that a colleague who used to call special education students "those kids" asked her, "How can we help him (a special education student) succeed. I am really concerned about him." Several teachers noted reported increased "joint ownership" of students rather than "mine" and "yours". Having special education students (who learn in different ways) in their classes helps regular educators see the diversity of students and influences them to attempt a variety of teaching strategies.

Inservice/Preservice Recommendations

Nearly all teachers indicated that specialized inservice education was limited because most of the professional development offered was focused on KERA. Some training had been offered in specific changes on regulations associated with special education. A few teachers mentioned that the alternative portfolio (for assessment of special education students) training was useful.

The most productive training, in the view of participants, was that presented by practitioners. One member described this type as conducted by "those who have experienced it, who are not working on a theoretical construct, but are working in the world of reality." "Schools for All Kids" through Systems Change was described as successful since a regular educator needed to attend along with the special educator. Some participants described appreciating presenters who were "motivators" and provided "tangible things to take home". Several teachers remarked that they did not need trainers who were "just selling inclusion."

Simple sharing sessions among colleagues were also described as effective inservice events. Participants recommended peer meetings where teachers shared recent efforts or discussed ideas they would like to try. One of the participants suggested, "Districts need to cultivate talent in their own schools." One respondent noted, "I tend to bring back more ideas when I go to peer meetings." Other participants appreciated inservices that put things on a simple or practical level: "You don't have to make it complicated to make it work."

Several special education teachers noted that they did not receive much additional training in special education. They indicated that they had to "go to the regular ed stuff" or participate in mandatory training related to KERA. One special educator indicated that serving on the local professional development committee allowed her to have some input in decisions about the type of training special educators might attend. A few teachers noted that instructional assistants did not receive sufficient professional development. Participants added that regular educators should become familiar with Section 504 plans to assist nonidentified students who need assistance (ADHD, and others).

Some teachers described as useful training they received in conflict resolution and working as team members. While much of that training was associated with KERA, many special educators agreed that it was important training because of the intense collaboration necessary with inclusion. One participant described her "dream inservice" as including specific strategies for students with disabilities as part of an overall orientation to inclusion. Training on curricular and instructional modifications for special education students was recommended by several participants. Many special educators noted that they frequently must attend the "regular education" training, but that regular educators would benefit from attending some special education training.

The most frequently mentioned recommendation for preservice teacher education programs was to provide more classroom experiences. "On the job training is a must. Be in that classroom, because it may not be what you think it is," noted one special educator. Several participants suggested that preservice teachers should spend a required amount of time in inclusive classrooms *every* year, not just during the senior year. Participants believed that higher education needs to provide appropriate experiences in a variety of settings (various levels and disabilities), as well.

Another frequently mentioned suggestion for preservice education was that regular education majors should take more than an introductory special education course. Also, participants recommend eliminating separate certifications for regular and special education. One teacher suggested, "It should be a flat (single) teacher certification, with every teacher teaching every student." One special educator noted that regular educators "are the first ones to see that student, and they have to be aware of what the problems are." Coursework should include more than just "a paragraph per disability." Some of the suggested courses included learning strategies, IEP development, identification of specific disabilities, and the referral process.

Other participants suggested that higher education personnel need "to get into the real classroom". They also suggested that members of higher education be open-minded to paradigms other than just their own. "It is really easy to sit in a room with adults, and do all the lessons as if you were a kid," noted one participant, "but that's not the real world." One teacher

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suggested that teacher education programs provide release time to permit experienced K-12 teachers speak with preservice teachers about real life in inclusion classrooms.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Kentucky regular and special educators provided many insights into their concerns about and recommendations for inclusion through their participation in the two focus group interviews. The following conclusions are based on information they provided.

1. Several essential components for successful implementation of inclusion were identified. These include but are not limited to:

    - Sufficient common planning time for collaborating regular and special educators.
    - Support from school and district administration manifested through fiscal, time, and personnel resources and public relations.
    - A wide range of strategies for modifying curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
    - Positive teamwork between collaborating regular and special educators.
    - A balance of special education students and regular education students in each inclusion class that takes into consideration student disabilities and assistance provided.
    - An appropriate and manageable number of special education students and inclusion class responsibilities assigned per special educator.
    - Support and understanding from parents of both regular education and special education students.

2. Time for implementing inclusion (for training and planning, in particular) is limited, especially with the many other reform efforts underway in Kentucky.

3. Regular educators are concerned about their ability to meet the needs of special education students.

4. Professional development opportunities for special educators are limited, especially due to the necessary training associated with KERA.

5. Preservice preparation of regular educators is inadequate for implementing inclusion and working with special education students.

6. Inclusion of special education students can have both positive and negative effects on the regular education class.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered based on focus group interview data. These represent a sample of the views of Kentucky special and regular educators but cannot be generalized to these populations due to the limited number of focus group participants. Participants suggest that schools and districts:

1. Provide a continuum of services from self-contained to full-inclusion instructional settings.

2. Optimize the time regular and special educators have to plan together. Although many logistical constraints may exist, creative processes can be identified and put in place.

3. Demonstrate commitment for inclusion at all levels of school administration. Commitment is essential for effective implementation.

4. Maintain reasonable class size and a balance (dependent upon the nature of student disabilities and composition of the class) of special education students and regular education students in each inclusion class.

5. Increase the number of instructional assistants available to collaborating teachers.

6. Enhance the professional development opportunities for all involved in the inclusion process. These groups include regular and special education teachers and instructional assistants. Content should include teamwork, as well special education issues. Awareness programs for parents would also be beneficial.

7. Increase both coursework and experiential opportunities in special education for preservice regular education teachers.

8 Maximize opportunities for sharing successful inclusion processes through meetings, conferences, newsletters, and the like.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INCLUSION FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Appendix A

Inclusion Focus Group Interview Protocol

Introduction

Good morning/afternoon! My name is _____ and assisting me is _____. Our task today is to talk with you about your experiences with inclusion. The purpose of our discussion is twofold: 1) to identify teacher concerns regarding inclusion; and 2) to compile strategies teachers have found effective for helping special needs children in regular classes. We would like for you to speak honestly and candidly with respect to the questions I will pose to you.

Before we begin, I need to establish a few ground rules. First, our discussion will be tape recorded because I will not be taking notes during our discussion and may later want to recall something said. Because of the recording, please speak clearly and I'll try to encourage only one speaker at a time. Also, _____ will be taking notes as we talk so that in the event the tape recorder malfunctions, she/he can help me remember what was said. Everything that you tell us will remain anonymous and will only be used in summary form. Specific names of schools and other students, teachers, or parents will not be used. If you need clarification of the question, please feel free to ask.

While time is short today, it is important that everyone has an opportunity to express their concerns and share their experiences. It will be my job to insure that everyone who has something to say has that opportunity. There are not right or wrong answers. No one in the group, including me, is to be considered the expert on anything that we talk about. Therefore, please do not judge one another's opinions; everyone's opinion is equally important.

Finally, we will take a brief formal break about midway through the morning/afternoon, but please feel free to use the restroom or take a brief stretch if you need to do so as quietly as you can.

With those guidelines in mind, let's begin!

1. First, please introduce yourself and briefly describe your experience with inclusion.

2. Please describe your concerns about inclusion.

3. As you began your experience with inclusion, what obstacles or barriers did you confront and what solutions did you create to address them? (Probe for: in the school, at the district level, with families, with colleagues, with students, or others)

4. What support has been most helpful in implementing inclusion?

5. Within the regular education classroom, which strategies or practices have seemed most effective with special needs students?

6. What effect does having a special needs child have on classroom climate and other students in a regular classroom?

7. What inservice training has been most helpful to you as you include special needs students in the regular classroom?

8. If you were making recommendations for teacher preparation in inclusion for regular (general) and special education teachers, what would you most strongly recommend?

9. Think of one special needs student with whom you work who has made great gains. Briefly characterize for us, if you would, his/her greatest problems in the classroom and the ways you and the student have overcome them.

10. Think of one special needs student with whom you work who has not made great gains. Briefly characterize for us, if you would, his/her greatest problems in the classroom and the ways you and the student have tried to overcome them.

11. Are there other things that you would like to tell us or things we forgot to ask about?

APPENDIX B

IEP GOAL - ACTIVITY MATRIX

Appendix B

IEP Goal - Activity Matrix

Contributed by Marianne Fox, Cardinal Valley Elementary School
Fayette County Schools, KY

GENERAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES X = Formal Instruction, P = Practice

IEP Goals															

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GENERAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES X = Formal Instruction, P = Practice

	8:40	9:15	9:45	10:15	10:45	11:15	11:45	12:25	1:00	1:25	2:05	2:40	3:05	
IEP Goals	Specials Art, Music, PE, Library	Specials	Calendar	Literature Group	Language Group	Centers	Lunch	Math	Gross Motor	Computer	Matching or Floor Play	Recess	Dismiss	TO	CBI
	PP	PP	PP	PP		PP	PP	PP				PP	PP		Thurs. 11:30 1:30
Do Basic Cooking			X								X				
Button & Unbutton	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Independent Toilet	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Taking Turns	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ask for Help	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Maintain V. & Ph. Control			X		X						X				
Classify Similar Objects			XX		X	X	X	X	X		X				
Demonstrate "One"			XX			X	X				X				
One to One Correspon-dence															

PP = Primary Program

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